



FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THE CONGRESSIONAL STUDY GROUPS

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October 25, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Speaker
H232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Extension for the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of FMC, the association of Former Members of Congress, we, FMC's Executive Officers, are writing to thank you for your leadership in creating the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. As former Members, we understand better than most that transforming this institution into one that can competently address 21st century problems is very hard work. It's also necessary work. We are impressed with what the Select Committee has managed to accomplish in just a few short months, but there is still much work to do. We hope that you will consider extending the Select Committee through the end of the 116th Congress so that they can continue the essential work they've only just begun.

The Select Committee closely aligns with the mission of FMC: Democrats and Republicans working together for the greater good; an unwavering commitment to Congress as an institution; and the goal of strengthening Congress so that the next generation of public servants views the Article One branch as a noble and purposeful calling.

We were heartened by the Committee's decision to begin its important work by looking back. Following their inaugural Member Day hearing, the Select Committee turned its attention to past reform efforts. Understanding the issues that previous Select Committees considered and what kinds of solutions they proposed provides valuable background and a crucial foundation on which the Select Committee can build. We recognize that the majority of current House Members were elected after 1992, when Congress last formed a Committee for the purpose of modernizing. Given these institutional dynamics, it's crucial that Members today understand that many of the challenges they face are not new.

The Select Committee's next hearing featured a bipartisan panel of FMC Members testifying about their experiences in serving and offering recommendations for reform. We very much appreciated the Select Committee's desire to listen to and learn from their predecessors.

LEADERSHIP:

The Hon. Martin Frost, *President* | The Hon. Charles Boustany, *Vice President*
The Hon. L.F. Payne, *Secretary* | The Hon. Ann Marie Buerkle, *Treasurer* | The Hon. Cliff Stearns, *Immediate Past President*

EXECUTIVE TEAM:

Peter Weichlein, *Esq.*, *Chief Executive Officer* | Sabine Schleidt, *Chief Operating Officer*
Sharon West Witiw, *Director of Community Outreach* | Paul Kincaid, *Director of Congressional Outreach*



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Former Reps. Tom Davis, Vic Fazio, Martin Frost, Reid Ribble, Tim Roemer, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen provided thoughtful remarks and honest advice about what Congress needs to fix. We believe there is value in studying the experiences of previous congresses and applaud the Select Committee for the informed approach they are taking as they do their work.

Thanks to your direction and support, the Select Committee has already accomplished a great deal. In addition to reporting out 29 recommendations that address important issues like transparency, House human resources, technology, and accessibility, the Select Committee has held 11 substantive hearings on complex topics, and invested countless hours listening to what Members and staff have to say about modernizing Congress. Given that the Select Committee was not funded until the end of March and did not have dedicated committee staff on board until mid-April, their progress is remarkable. As former Members, we are acutely aware of how rare this kind of progress is.

We also believe that Members of the Committee are setting a groundbreaking example for their colleagues, proving that it is possible for Members from both sides of the aisle to work together, engage in tough discussions, and find bipartisan solutions to the challenges that all Members face. Their collaborative approach is as genuine as it is encouraging. As former Members, we understand that the obstacles Congress faces are many and modernizing this institution won't happen overnight, nor should it. The issues in the Select Committee's mandate are complex and we believe they deserve more thorough consideration than can be given in the year's remaining months. This work is absolutely essential if Congress is to uphold its Article One responsibilities.

We are thankful for your foresight and tremendous leadership in recognizing that transformational change is necessary for Congress to evolve and hope that you will consider extending the Select Committee through the end of the 116th Congress. Thank you!

The Hon. Martin Frost (D-TX)
FMC President

The Hon. Cliff Stearns (R-FL)
FMC Immediate Past President

The Hon. L.F. Payne (D-VA)
FMC Secretary

Sincerely,

The Hon. Charles Boustany (R-LA)
FMC Vice President

The Hon. Ann Marie Buerkle (R-NY)
FMC Treasurer

Peter M. Weichlein, Esq.
FMC CEO

CC: House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy